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Team FTM Takes 4th at XPD Portugal



Saturday, 15 December 2007



Team FTM takes on a stacked International crowd at XPD Portugal and earns a hard fought 4th Place! Early navigation mistakes quickly dropped the gang to the back of the pack. Patience and persistence paid off as they slowly locked onto the course and steadily picked off checkpoint after checkpoint gradually gaining speed. Near the race end, the team was trucking at full speed and crossed the finish line with little left in the tank. The gang crossed the finish line on the beach and, due to the format, only found out their fate a few hours later at the post race dinner (of which they were late for). Read on for more about the race...

The team was forcefully led by Melissa Coombes who took command early on. Christian Burke, Evan Hyde, and Jeff Bender could only follow in amazement as she hammered through the bike navigation. Melissa and Christian found that each managing navigation duties in sections worked very well with Melissa taking on the bike sections and some of the later trek sections, and Christian attacking the trek and paddle sections. Since maps were given to the teams at the beginning of each of the five stages (this was NOT a stage race) of which there were two to four disciplines per stage, map study had to be done on the move. Melissa showed great skills at reading maps while moving on the bike at full speed.

The sleep strategy netted about 90 minutes of sleep over the 82 hours of racing, a little thin, but effective. The weather provided the team with variety including sun, cold, rain, peanut butter mud, chilly waters, but overall pleasant racing temperatures. The race directors made sure that the course travelled through the most historic and storied parts of Portugal. All the citadels, towns, ruins and caves we had heard about we raced through at one time or another. It is no surprise that XPD Portugal has been picked for the AR World Championships in 2009. It is a beautiful country with plenty of spectacular racing to offer.

Team FTM was also given the OK from the race directors to submit LIVE blog entries to the team site (click Blogs on the toolbar) as the race unfolded. The team agreed that the time taken to enter the text and take a picture on a cell phone was a worthwhile sacrifice to keeping our friends and family updated in a way never seen before. Aside from one 36 hour period where we had zero time to post a single thing, the experiment went off quite successfully. We will surely attempt this in as many future races as possible.

Once again, congrats to the team for an exciting finish and a very bright future. Of course, none of this could be possible without the sponsors Function Drinks, Inov-8 Shoes, Nuun Active Hydration, Gen4Living, and Rudy Project to name a few.

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